

Protect and reinstate our media diversity!

This letter is a comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. If it's goals are to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, then the FCC should certainly retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question and should also give careful consideration to reinstating many of the regulations that were abandoned during the Clinton administration. Such regulations ensure that the public interest will at least SOMETIMES be served by the companies which profit from their use of the public airwaves. These regulations justifiably limit the market power of already huge corporations in the broadcast industry.

Media deregulation since 1996 has resulted in less competition, not more. It has allowed giant corporate conglomerates to swallow their smaller competitors and to further consolidate the media industry. While there may be indeed be more numbers and types of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited and mainstream media is overwhelmingly the views of these huge corporations. Because they are the same views controlled by the same corporations Such a narrowing of perspectives is harmful to our democracy.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings for each of the 50 states of this nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest. In short, all Americans are stakeholders in this debate.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the individual American people in each state rather than predominately corporate entities to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Dawn S. Gitchell